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Comprehensive assessment of the system of geographical distribution and assessment of the issues relating to possible changes in the number of posts subject to the system of geographical distribution

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/305 of 15 April 2003. In section IX, paragraph 2, of that resolution the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to conduct a study which included a comprehensive assessment of the system of geographical distribution and an assessment of the issues relating to possible changes in the number of posts subject to the system of geographical distribution, bearing in mind Article 101 of the Charter and the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization.

The report reviews the origin and purpose of the system of desirable ranges for staff in posts subject to geographical distribution and the changes that have taken place over time, and assesses the implications of modifications to several factors used in the calculation of geographical distribution, i.e., membership, population and contribution, as well as to the base figure for the number of posts included in the system. Three scenarios are presented as follows: (a) changes to geographical distribution by varying the weight of the membership, population and contribution factors while holding the base figure of posts constant at the current level of 2,700; (b) changes to geographical distribution by expanding the population and the base figure, so as to include groups of staff not currently considered to have geographic status while keeping the weight of the factors (membership, population and contribution) constant at the current levels, and (c) changes in the application of the system of weighted ranges.

The three scenarios for modifications are evaluated in terms of their impact on Member States' representation status as well as their consistency with the current

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thinking on the concept of geographic status by the General Assembly. In addition, the financial implications of expanding the base population in the second scenario referred to above are presented as an element to be considered in determining the effectiveness and efficiency of changes to the system.

The report draws the General Assembly's attention to the potential advantages and drawbacks of each of the variants for its consideration.

The Secretary-General recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/305 of 15 April 2003, section IX, in paragraph 2 of which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to conduct a study which included a comprehensive assessment of the system of geographical distribution and an assessment of the issues relating to possible changes in the number of posts subject to the system of geographical distribution, bearing in mind Article 101 of the Charter and the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization.

2. It reviews the origin and purpose of the system and the changes that have taken place since 1945 and assesses the implications of modifications to the factors used in the calculation of geographical distribution, i.e. population, membership and contribution, and to the baseline number of posts. Three scenarios are presented, as follows:

(a) Changes to geographical distribution by varying the weight of the membership, population and contribution factors while holding the base figure constant at the current level of 2,700;

(b) Changes to geographical distribution by expanding the base figure and population so as to include groups of staff that do not currently have geographic status. In this scenario the weight of the factors (membership, population and contribution) is kept constant at the current levels. Simulations were conducted using the following population base:

(i) Staff in the Professional and higher categories under the regular budget;

(ii) Staff in the General Service and related categories and Professional and higher categories under the regular budget;

(iii) Staff in the Professional and higher categories under the regular budget and extrabudgetary resources; and

(iv) Staff in the General Service and related categories and Professional and higher categories under the regular budget and extrabudgetary resources;

(c) Changes to geographical distribution by application of the weighted system of ranges.

3. The three scenarios for modification are evaluated in terms of their impact on Member States' representation status. In addition, financial implications, an element in determining effectiveness and efficiency, are presented in relation to the second scenario referred to above.

4. Also, the report reviews briefly the application of the system of geographical distribution in the United Nations common system and compares common denominators of the system of equitable geographic distribution in organizations of the common system with the situation in the Secretariat.

II. Origin and initial purpose of the concept of geographical distribution of the staff

5. The representation of their nationals in the staff of the United Nations Secretariat has been a major concern of Member States since the beginning of the Organization. This concern is reflected in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter, which governs the selection of staff. That paragraph reads:

> "The paramount consideration in the employment of staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity. Due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible."

6. The General Assembly's first resolution on the issue of the composition of the Secretariat and the principle of geographical distribution (resolution 153 (II) of 15 November 1947) reaffirmed the principle of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity in the staff of the Secretariat, as well as the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographic basis as possible. The third preambular paragraph of that resolution referred to the international character of the Organization and stated that in order to avoid undue predominance of national practices, the policies and administrative methods of the Secretariat should reflect and profit to the highest degree from assets of the various cultures and the technical competence of all Member nations.

7. In paragraph 2 of the same resolution the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to: (a) review the recruitment policy with a view to improving the geographical distribution of posts within the various departments; (b) take the necessary steps with a view to engaging staff members from those countries that did not yet have any of their nationals in the Secretariat; and (c) take all practicable steps to ensure the improvement of the geographical distribution of the staff, including the issuance of such rules and regulations as might be necessary to comply with the principles of the Charter.

8. Pursuant to resolution 153 (II), the Secretary-General submitted a report (A/652 of 2 September 1948) entitled "Composition of the Secretariat and the principle of geographical distribution", in which the principles that determined his policy in this respect were set out. Paragraphs 7 to 9 of that report read:

> "Rightly understood, the cardinal principle of geographical distribution is not that nationals of a particular nation should have a specified number of posts at a particular grade or grades, or that they should receive in salary as a group a particular percentage of the total outlay in salaries, but that, in the first place, the administration should be satisfied that the Secretariat is enriched by the experience and culture which each Member nation can furnish and that each Member nation should, in its turn, be satisfied that its own cultures and philosophy make a full contribution to the Secretariat.
>
> "The whole problem, therefore, is that of establishing acceptable criteria which are administratively workable. Any rigid mathematical formula, to whatever yardstick it may be related, whether to national income, literacy, financial contribution to the budget of the United Nations, or any other criterion, would restrict in an impracticable fashion the flexibility on which the

success of any good administration must depend, and is therefore unacceptable.

"Accordingly, after a great deal of consideration, including discussion with the Staff Committee, the conclusion was reached that no single criterion would by itself be valid but that as financial contributions to the United Nations budget had been fixed in relation to a combination of pertinent criteria, it would be reasonable to take them as a basis for the flexible system."

9. The report introduced, for flexibility, an upward or downward variation within 25 per cent of the budgetary contribution, and proposed to limit international recruitment to staff in posts equivalent to grades 8 (equivalent to the current grade G-7) and above, with the exception of those occupying posts requiring special language abilities.

10. The concept expressed in the second sentence of Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter — due regard to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible — as developed and interpreted by the General Assembly, has become known as the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The parallel problems of defining what constituted equitable geographical distribution of the Secretariat and establishing a yardstick for measuring progress towards that end were first addressed in 1948 through the introduction in the Secretary-General's bulletin No. 77 of the concept of "desirable ranges" for Member States, in response to General Assembly resolution 153 (II).

11. Under this system, specific posts would not be distributed to Member States, but rather a range of posts was established within which each Member State would be adequately represented as a guideline for recruitment priorities. General Assembly resolution 1559 (XV) of 18 December 1960 confirmed the system of desirable ranges and linked the concept of geographical appointment status of staff with the concept of budgetary posts set aside for this purpose.

12. Until 1962, only one factor was used to determine the desirable ranges: the contribution of each Member State to the Organization's regular budget. General Assembly resolution 1852 (XVII) of 19 December 1962 added two other factors: membership in the United Nations and the population of the Member State. From 1962 until 1988, the importance, or weight, of each factor varied according to successive General Assembly resolutions, but preference was always, and continues to be, given to the contribution factor.

13. Successive discussions among Member States about the changes in the factors for equitable geographical distribution have been characterized by two dominant points of view. One group of Member States, composed largely of developing countries, wanted more weight to be given to the membership factor, or alternatively to the population factor, whereas another group, composed mainly of Member States with high rates of assessment, wanted to keep the greater weight on the contribution factor. In its resolution 41/206 C of 11 December 1986, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit updated calculations on desirable ranges for all Member States, taking into account the views expressed at its forty-first session and, in particular, criteria such as: (a) the desirability of the base figure for the calculations being related to the actual number of posts subject to geographical distribution; (b) the movement towards the establishment of parity between the membership and contribution factors; (c) the direct allocation of posts subject to the population factor in proportion to each Member State's population; and (d) the need

for flexibility upward and downward from the midpoint of the desirable ranges. This eventually resulted in the adoption of resolution 42/220 A of 21 December 1987, introducing as from 1 January 1988 the current regime for the system of desirable ranges.

14. General Assembly resolution 42/220 A requested the Secretary-General to base the desirable ranges, with effect from 1 January 1988, on the following criteria:

(a) The base figure for the calculations would initially be 2,700 posts;

(b) The weight of the membership factor would be 40 per cent of the base figure;

(c) The population factor, which would be allotted a weight of 5 per cent, would be directly related to the population of Member States, and posts subject to that factor would be distributed among Member States in proportion to their population;

(d) The contribution factor would be based on the distribution of the remaining posts among Member States in proportion to the scale of assessments;

(e) The upper and lower limits of each range would be based on a flexibility of 15 per cent upward and downward from the midpoint of the desirable range, but not less than 4.8 posts up and down, the upper limit of the range being not less than 14 posts;

(f) The base figure would be adjusted whenever the actual number of posts subject to geographical distribution increased or decreased by 100, the weights of the three factors being maintained.

15. Table 1 shows the chronological evolution of the three determining factors and of the base figure in the system of desirable ranges. The weight of the contribution factor varies between 55 and 86.4 per cent, the membership factor between 6.9 and 40 per cent and the population factor between 5 and 8.9 per cent.

Table 1
Chronological evolution of the determining factors and the baseline in the system of desirable ranges

Year	*Base figure (number of posts)*	*Membership*	*Population*	*Contribution*	*General Assembly resolution*
			(percentage)		
1962	1 500	6.9-34.7	6.7	58.6-86.4	1852 (XVII)
1967	2 000	6.9-34.7	6.7	58.6-86.4	1852 (XVII)
1976	2 600	24.5	8.5	67	1852 (XVII)
1980	2 700	25.2	8.9	65.9	34/219
1981	3 350	7.75	7.25	85	35/210
1985	3 350	36.8	7.2	56	35/210
1988	2 700	40.0	5	55	42/220
1998	2 600	40.0	5	55	42/220
2002	2 700	40.0	5	55	42/220
2004	2 700	40.0	5	55	42/220

III. Current applicable definition of the concept of geographic status

16. Since 1988, the system's basic criteria for the definition of desirable ranges have remained unchanged. This includes a base figure used for the calculation of all ranges. The weight of the factors taken into account for the distribution of geographical posts remains at 55 per cent for contribution, 40 per cent for membership and 5 per cent for population.

17. The current base figure used for the calculation of all ranges is 2,700 posts. This figure depends on the number of posts subject to geographical distribution but is not equal to it. As set out in resolution 42/220 A, section III, paragraph 1 (f), the base figure is adjusted whenever the actual number of posts subject to geographical distribution increases or decreases by 100.

18. The principle that all Member States ought to be represented in the Organization is reflected in the membership factor, which is applied equally to all Member States. It is equal to 5.65 posts for each Member State, which is the total number of posts for this factor (40 per cent of 2,700 = 1,080 posts), divided by 191, the number of Member States. The differences in population among Member States are taken into account through the population factor. It is based on the proportion of each Member State's population relative to the global population of all Member States, using the *Population and Vital Statistics Report* of the United Nations. For each country, this factor is equal to the total number of posts for the population factor (5 per cent of 2,700 = 135 posts) divided by the total population of all Member States and multiplied by the population of the relevant Member State. The posts allotted to the contribution factor are distributed to the Member States in proportion to the latest scale of assessments for the contributions of Member States to the regular budget of the Organization. For each Member State this factor equals the total number of posts for the contribution factor (55 per cent of 2,700 = 1,485 posts) divided by 100 and multiplied by the Member State's assessment percentage.

19. The posts allotted to each Member State through the application of the contribution, membership and population factors are added together to establish the midpoint of each Member State's desirable range. A flexibility factor of plus and minus 15 per cent is then calculated to determine the upper and lower limits of the particular desirable range. If the figure resulting from the application of the 15 per cent factor is less than 4.8 posts, the latter figure is applied. The minimum upper limit is 14 posts. A Member State is considered "unrepresented" when not a single one of its nationals is serving in a post subject to geographical distribution having gone through the established selection process. It is "underrepresented" when the number of its nationals appointed to such posts is below the lower limit of the desirable range. It is "within range" when the number of its nationals appointed to such posts is between the upper and lower limits of the desirable range; and it is "overrepresented" when the number of its nationals appointed to such posts exceeds the upper limit of the desirable range. The representation status of Member States is affected by many factors, notably turnover of staff, changes in the scale of assessments and changes in the total number of Member States.

20. Administrative instruction ST/AI/2002/4 specifies geographic status as the status given to staff in the Professional category and above on recruitment for one year or longer against a post subject to equitable geographical distribution and to the

application of the system of desirable ranges, i.e., a regular-budget post in the Secretariat at the Professional level or above (except language posts up to P-5). All successful candidates in a national competitive recruitment examination also have geographic status.

21. Staff considered to be holding appointments with geographic status are those appointed by the Secretary-General for a period of at least one year to posts funded under the regular budget at the Professional and higher categories under the system of desirable ranges.

22. The following categories of staff are excluded from geographic appointment status:

(a) Staff appointed to the secretariats of subsidiary programmes, funds and organs with special status in matters of appointment;

(b) Staff appointed to peacekeeping posts, posts specifically funded for other field mission service or posts financed under the support account for peacekeeping operations;

(c) Staff appointed to posts with special language requirements;

(d) Staff in the Field Service and the General Service and related categories (such as Trades and Crafts, Security and Safety Service and Public Information Assistants) who are locally recruited;

(e) Staff appointed to posts for service limited to the United Nations Environment Programme;

(f) Staff appointed to posts for service limited to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme;

(g) Staff appointed to posts for service limited to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime;

(h) Staff appointed to posts financed on an inter-agency basis;

(i) Staff appointed to technical cooperation project posts;

(j) National officers at United Nations information centres.

Staff on special leave without pay and on secondment to other organizations are not included in the total number of staff in geographic posts.

IV. Modifications in the parameters of geographic status and their implications

A. Scenario I: varying the weights of existing factors within the current base figure

23. Varying the weight of the membership, population and contribution factors within the limits of the existing base figure constitutes the most common method of adjusting the geographical distribution of posts. Although in essence a purely mathematical operation, with no direct financial implications, variation of the factors is subject to discussion and approval by the General Assembly.

24. A number of factors and variations have been proposed and discussed in the past. In addition to membership, population and contribution, the level of development of Member States and economic and social indicators of capacity to pay[1] have been considered but not applied. In section I, paragraph 1 (d), of its resolution 34/219 of 20 December 1979 the General Assembly requested "a study of the implications of the establishment of a ceiling on the percentage contribution for calculating the personnel entitlement of any Member State".

25. Options for changes in the number and weight of the factors for equitable geographical distribution have been undertaken in a number of studies by the Secretariat at the request of the General Assembly. They are included in the reports of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/31/154 of 19 August 1976, A/C.5/35/36 of 27 October 1980, A/C.5/41/6 of 24 September 1986, A/C.5/42/7 of 22 September 1987 and Corr.1, A/C.5/46/2 of 27 August 1991 and A/57/414 of 17 September 2002).

26. Within the context of the current study, and taking into consideration the debates of the Fifth Committee on this subject at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, five variations in the weight of the membership, population and contribution factors are considered. In the first three variants, one of the three factors is weighted at 100 per cent and the other two factors at 0 per cent. In the fourth variant, the weight of the membership factor is raised to 75 per cent, the weight of the population factor is raised to 10 per cent and that of the contribution factor is reduced to 15 per cent. In the fifth variant, the contribution factor is increased to 70 per cent, the weight of the population factor remains at 5 per cent and the weight of the membership factor stands at 25 per cent. In all five variants the base figure of 2,700 posts and the number of staff in posts subject to geographical distribution, which stood at 2,545 as at 31 December 2004, are held constant. The baseline for comparison and analysis is the current factor weighting: 40 per cent for membership, 5 per cent for population and 55 per cent for contribution. The representation status of Member States under the current system of desirable ranges as at 31 December 2004 is as follows: 16 unrepresented, 10 underrepresented, 148 within range and 17 overrepresented. The outcomes from the application of each of the variants are summarized in table 2.

Table 2
Comparative table for varying factors for geographical distribution as at 31 December 2004

Variant	*Membership*	*Population*	*Contribution*	*Unrepresented Member States*	*Under-represented Member States*	*Member States within range*	*Over-represented Member States*
	(percentage)						
Current situation	**40**	**5**	**55**	**16**	**10**	**148**	**17**
1	100	0	0	16	109	43	23
2	0	100	0	0	27	141	23
3	0	0	100	0	17	161	13
4	75	10	15	16	88	64	23
5	25	5	70	0	14	161	16

Note: For this exercise, the baseline number of posts of 2,700 and the number of staff in posts subject to geographical distribution, which stood at 2,545 as at 31 December 2004, are held constant.

Variant 1

27. As indicated in table 2, using only the membership factor (with population and contribution at 0 per cent) provides each Member State with an equal number of posts (14.1). This results in an eleven-fold increase in the number of underrepresented Member States, from the baseline figure of 10 to 109; a 35 per cent increase in the number of overrepresented Member States, from 17 to 23; and a decrease of 71 per cent in the number of Member States within range, from 148 to 43. There is no change to the number of unrepresented Member States; it remains at 16. The variant does not conform to the General Assembly's previous position that geographic distribution needs to be determined by a combination of several factors (see resolution 1852 (XVII) of 19 December 1962), and it does not reflect the importance the General Assembly has given to population and contribution through the weights it allotted to those factors (see resolution 41/206 C of 11 December 1986).

Variant 2

28. Using population as the sole factor (with membership and contribution at 0 per cent) results in almost tripling the number of underrepresented Member States, from 10 to 27; increasing the number of overrepresented Member States by 35 per cent, from 17 to 23; and reducing the number of Member States within range by 4.7 per cent, from 148 to 141. The number of unrepresented Member States falls to 0, due to the fact that the lower limit of the range has become 0. The variant does not reflect the importance attached by the General Assembly to membership and contribution through the weights it allotted to those factors.

Variant 3

29. Giving the contribution factor full weight (with population and membership at 0 per cent) results in raising the number of underrepresented Member States by 70 per cent, from 10 to 17. However, it increases the number of Member States within range from 148 to 161 and also reduces the number of overrepresented Member States from 17 to 13, a 23 per cent decrease. The number of unrepresented Member States falls to 0. This variant has a triple positive effect, on the number of unrepresented Member States, Member States within range and overrepresented Member States. The variant does not reflect the importance attached by the General Assembly to membership and population through the weights it allotted to those factors.

Variant 4

30. In this variant, all three existing factors are retained, but with a different weight distribution from the current one. The membership factor dominates, at 75 per cent; the population factor increases to 10 per cent, and the contribution factor decreases to 15 per cent. This variant results in raising the number of underrepresented Member States almost ninefold, from 10 to 88. The number of Member States within range decreases by more than 50 per cent, from 148 to 64. The number of overrepresented Member States increases by 35 per cent, from 17 to 23. The number of unrepresented Member States stands unchanged at 16. Like other variants, it does not reflect the General Assembly's position that geographic distribution needs to be determined by a combination of several factors.

Variant 5

31. Like variant number 4, this variant retains the three existing factors. However, the contribution factor is allotted the most weight, 70 per cent, the population factor stands at 5 per cent, and the membership factor is reduced to 25 per cent. In this variant, the number of unrepresented Member States falls to 0, the number of underrepresented Member States increases by 40 per cent, from 10 to 14, the number of Member States within range increases from 148 to 161, and the number of overrepresented Member States decreases from 17 to 16. This variant does not reflect the importance attached by the General Assembly to membership and population through the weights it allotted to those factors.

B. Scenario II: changing the number or posts in the base figure through the inclusion of new personnel categories

32. Within the context of the present study, and taking into consideration the debates of the Fifth Committee on this subject at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, four variants with expanded base populations have been considered. The first includes all staff in posts in the Professional and higher categories under the regular budget; the second all staff in posts in the General Service and related categories and in the Professional and higher categories under the regular budget; the third all staff in posts in the Professional and higher categories under the regular budget and extrabudgetary resources; and the fourth all staff in posts in the General Service and related categories and in the Professional and higher categories under the regular budget and extrabudgetary resources. This approach changes fundamentally the scope of the current concept of geographic distribution; its application has regulatory and financial implications, as a larger pool of staff would become entitled to allowances and benefits under staff rule 104.7 (see para. 34).

33. For all four of the variants considered, the current weight of the factors (membership 40 per cent, population 5 per cent and contribution 55 per cent) remains unchanged. The base figure has been recalculated for each variant on the basis of data as at 31 December 2004. The baseline for comparison and analysis is the current base figure of 2,700. These variants are considered and analysed briefly in paragraphs 37 to 40 below.

34. The expansion of the base figure of 2,700 posts, as referred to in paragraph 32 above, would have financial implications. Staff rule 104.7 specifies that staff members other than those having been locally recruited shall be considered to have been internationally recruited. The allowances and benefits in general available to internationally recruited staff members include payment of travel expenses upon initial appointment and on separation for themselves and their spouses and dependent children, removal of household effects, non-resident's allowance, home leave, education grant and repatriation grant. Members of the Field Service and staff members recruited specifically for mission service are not eligible for non-resident's allowance or removal of household effects. Rule 104.6 specifies that a staff member regarded as having been locally recruited shall not be eligible for the allowances or benefits indicated under rule 104.7.

35. All staff in the Professional and higher categories, except national officers, are considered to have been internationally recruited and are entitled to expatriate

benefits and payment of travel expenses to and from the duty station. However, internationally recruited staff residing or serving in the country of their nationality are not eligible for expatriate benefits. The benefit of accelerated step increments is limited to staff in posts subject to geographical distribution. Expansion of the base figure to include all posts in the Professional and higher categories, irrespective of source of funding, would create an entitlement to accelerated step increments for staff placed against those posts when they have an adequate and confirmed knowledge of a second official language of the United Nations (see Staff Rules, annex I, para. 4).

36. Expanding the system of geographical distribution to include staff in the General Service and related categories under all sources of funding with a contract of one year or more, and not detailed from another agency to a peacekeeping mission, would have financial implications. The estimated cost of giving international status to staff in the General Service and related categories is derived from the unit annual cost of providing international benefits to staff in the General Service and related categories, calculated by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in paragraph 5 of its report on the availability in local labour markets of the skills for which international recruitment for the General Service category takes place (A/59/388 of 27 September 2004). The unit cost (cost per person) is then multiplied by the number of General Service and related staff whose duty station is not in their country of nationality.[2] On that basis, the annual total cost of providing international benefits to General Service and related categories would amount to approximately $55.5 million. This cost would be evenly spread over staff in posts in the General Service and related categories under the regular budget and extrabudgetary resources.

Variant 5

37. Including all posts in the Professional and higher categories under the regular budget in the system of geographical distribution will expand the base figure from the current 2,700 to 3,900. The application of this variant will cause major distortions in geographical distribution for certain Member States, as it will include such staff as those in posts previously categorized as having special language requirements. The majority of the 858 staff in this category as at 31 December 2004 come from 24 Member States. Bringing this population into geographic status will severely affect the representation level of the nine Member States whose nationals make up the largest contingent of staff in language posts. Moreover, as indicated in table 3, this variant will change the overall representation status of Member States in important ways. The number of underrepresented Member States will increase more than sevenfold, from 10 to 77, and the number of overrepresented Member States will grow from 17 to 21, a 23 per cent increase. The number of Member States within range decreases by 48 per cent, from 148 to 77. Opting for this variant would make the Secretariat the only organization in the United Nations common system that included staff in language posts in geographic status.

Table 3

Comparative table for varying base figure numbers for geographical distribution as at 31 December 2004

Variant	*Base figure*	*Staff with geographic status*	*Unrepresented Member States*	*Under-represented Member States*	*Member States within range*	*Over-represented Member States*
Current situation	**2 700**	**2 545**	**16**	**10**	**148**	**17**
6	3 900	3 068	16	77	77	21
7	8 100	7 534	15	116	21	39
8	7 600	5 609	12	111	33	35
9	16 000	14 549	11	116	15	49

Note: For all variants, the weight of the three factors remains at current levels: membership 40 per cent, population 5 per cent and contribution 55 per cent.

Variant 7

38. In this variant, which includes all staff in the General Service and related categories and Professional and higher categories under the regular budget, the base figure would increase from 2,700 to 8,100. The application of this variant will cause considerable variations in geographical distribution for certain Member States that host United Nations offices, as their nationals make up the majority of staff in the General Service and related categories. The number of staff subject to the system of geographical distribution will increase for these Member States. This variant will also change the overall Member State representation in important ways. The number of underrepresented Member States will increase elevenfold, from 10 to 116, while the number of overrepresented Member States will go up from 17 to 39, an increase of 129 per cent. The number of Member States within range is reduced from 148 to 21. The number of unrepresented Member States is decreased from 16 to 15. Opting for this variant would make the Secretariat the only organization in the United Nations common system that included staff in posts in the General Service and related categories in geographic status.

Variant 8

39. This variant, which calls for the inclusion of all staff in the Professional and higher categories under the regular budget and extrabudgetary resources, expands the base figure from 2,700 to 7,600. The inclusion of posts financed by extrabudgetary resources with a life cycle less well established than for that of posts financed under the regular budget may also create major fluctuations in base figures from one month to another. The application of this variant will change the overall Member State representation in important ways (see table 3). While there will be a decrease in the number of unrepresented Member States, from 16 to 12 (25 per cent), the number of underrepresented Member States will increase elevenfold, from 10 to 111, and the number of overrepresented Member States will grow from 17 to 35, an increase of 105 per cent. The number of Member States within range falls from 148 to 33, a reduction of 78 per cent. The application of this variant would lead to important practical implementation issues (monthly fluctuations of Member State representation status) and financial implications. Opting for this variant would

make the Secretariat the only organization in the United Nations common system, besides the World Health Organization, that included staff in posts financed by extrabudgetary resources in geographic status.

Variant 9

40. In this variant, which will include all staff in the Professional and higher categories and in the General Service and related categories under all sources of funding (regular budget and extrabudgetary resources), the base figure will expand from 2,700 to 16,000. The application of this variant will cause considerable variations in geographical distribution for certain Member States and will cause the overall Member State representation to change in important ways. While the number of unrepresented Member States will decrease by 31 per cent (from 16 to 11), underrepresentation will increase elevenfold, from 10 to 116, and the number of Member States within range will decrease from 148 to 15, a reduction of 90 per cent. The number of overrepresented Member States will increase by 188 per cent, from 17 to 49. Opting for this variant would also make the Secretariat the only organization in the United Nations common system that included staff in posts in the General Service and related categories and staff in posts financed by extrabudgetary resources in geographic status.

C. Scenario III: weighted ranges and posts within the context of the system of desirable ranges

41. In his report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/6860 of 16 October 1967), the Secretary-General reported, further to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 2241 A (XXI) of 20 December 1966, on the practicability of modifying the system of desirable ranges in such a way as to bring about a distinction between posts according to the duties and responsibilities attached to them. After examining several methods of weighting the apportionment of posts by nationality, the Secretary-General reported that the introduction of a system of weighting into the recruitment policy of the United Nations, whether on an arbitrary or salary scale of points, would bring with it only marginal refinements scarcely warranting the effort and time involved. At the request of the General Assembly, a system of weighting of posts was introduced in 1967 and reported on every year in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat. However, the main (non-weighted) system of desirable ranges remains applicable.

42. Different methods have been used to calculate the weighted ranges over the years. Currently, for the weighted range, midpoint and staff position data for each Member State (see table 4), the percentage of total staff in each grade (ibid., second column) is applied to the base figure of 2,700 (ibid., third column). The resulting figure is weighted by the gross salary per annum in United States dollars divided by 1,000 (ibid., fourth column) to produce a weighted base figure (ibid., fifth column). As at 30 June 2004, the weighted average value of each post was 86.37 points (233,219 divided by 2,700). Accordingly, the weighted membership factor is 93,288 points (40 per cent of 233,219), the weighted population factor is 11,611 points (5 per cent) and the weighted contribution factor is 128,270 points (55 per cent). These figures represent the global numbers; for each Member State a separate calculation based on the same factors results in a weighted base figure. The weighted midpoint in table 4 represents the sum of the weighted membership, population and

contribution factors, and the weighted range is calculated as 15 per cent upwards and downwards (but not less than 415 points up and down (4.8 times 86.37), with the upper limit being not less than 1,209 points (14 times 86.37). The weighted staff position for each Member State comprises the total number of staff of that country by grade, multiplied by the gross annual salary by grade.

Table 4
Methodology for deriving weighted ranges

Grade	*(1) Number of staff*	*(2) Percentage of total*	*(3)=(2) x base Weighted number of staff*	*(4) Salary[a]*	*(5)=(3) x (4) Weighted base figure*
USG	22	0.875	23.62	186	4 393
ASG	17	0.676	18.25	169	3 084
D-2	77	3.062	82.66	139	11 490
D-1	216	8.588	231.89	127	29 450
P-5	477	18.966	512.09	104	53 257
P-4	701	27.873	752.56	84	63 215
P-3	644	25.606	691.37	68	47 013
P-2	361	14.354	387.55	55	21 316
Total	**2 515**	**100.000**	**2 700.00**		**233 219**

[a] Gross annual salary, in United States dollars, divided by 1,000. Salary scale effective 1 January 2003.

43. Any difference in Member States' representation between the weighted and the non-weighted systems of ranges is determined by the way the staff of any country is distributed over the different grades in the Professional and higher categories. In case of an even distribution of staff of a Member State from the P-2 to the D-2 grade and beyond, the difference between the weighted and non-weighted systems of ranges is minimal, and an application of the weighted system will not lead to changes in the representation status of that Member State. If the staff is not evenly spread over the grades, changes in the Member State's representation status may occur. The application of the weighted system on the current population of staff in posts subject to geographical distribution as at 31 December 2004 indicates variations when compared with the baseline for the non-weighted variant (variant 0). These changes are indicated in table 5. The changes indicate more than a doubling of the number of underrepresented Member States, from 10 to 23, an increase of 59 per cent in the number of overrepresented Member States, from 17 to 27, and a decrease in the number of Member States within range by 15 per cent, from 148 to 125. This is caused by an uneven spread of nationals of Member States over the grades in the Professional and higher categories.

Table 5
Weighted ranges (baseline and variants)

Variant	*Base figure*	*Unrepresented Member States*	*Under-represented Member States*	*Member States within range*	*Over-represented Member States*
0 (non-weighted)	2 700 Membership (M): 40 per cent Population (P): 5 per cent Contribution (C): 55 per cent	16	10	148	17
0 weighted (w)	2 700 M: 40 per cent P: 5 per cent C: 55 per cent	16	23	125	27
1w	3 900 M: 40 per cent P: 5 per cent C: 55 per cent	16	83	67	25
2w	7 600 M: 40 per cent P: 5 per cent C: 55 per cent	12	113	29	37
3w	2 700 M: 100 per cent P: 0 per cent C: 0 per cent	16	113	36	26
4w	2 700 M: 0 per cent P: 0 per cent C: 100 per cent	0	17	156	18
5w	2 700 M: 75 per cent P: 10 per cent C: 15 per cent	16	101	53	21

44. For the sake of consistency with the two previous scenarios, the impact of five variants with changing weights for the factors and with changing base figures has been considered. The weighted baseline is variant 0w, which is the transposition of the current system from non-weighted to weighted (base figure 2,700, membership 40 per cent, population 5 per cent, contribution 55 per cent). Variants 1w and 2w consider the impact of expanding the base figure. Variants 3w, 4w and 5w consider the impact of changing the weight of the factors with a constant base figure of 2,700. Variant 1w considers all staff in the Professional and higher categories under the regular budget as having geographic status. Variant 2w considers all staff in the Professional and higher categories under the regular budget and extrabudgetary resources as having geographic status. Variant 3w looks at the case with the membership factor at 100 per cent and both population and contribution factors at 0 per cent. Variant 4w considers the case with the contribution factor at 100 per cent and both membership and population factors at 0 per cent. Finally, variant 5w places the dominant membership factor at 75 per cent, the population factor at 10 per cent

and the contribution factor at 15 per cent. The synopsis of the five simulations is presented in table 5.

45. Variant 4w (contribution at 100 per cent) will bring 156 Member States within range (higher than both the weighted and unweighted baselines) but increases the numbers of underrepresented and overrepresented Member States. All other variants have an adverse effect on the number of Member States within range, which in the unweighted baseline is 148. All variants except variant 1w increase both the number of underrepresented Member States and the number of overrepresented Member States relative to the unweighted baseline. For variants 1w and 2w, which consider the expansion of the base figure, identical considerations prevail as for the unweighted ranges described in paragraphs 37 to 40. For variants 3w, 4w and 5w, which consider changing the weight of the factors, identical considerations prevail as for the unweighted ranges described in paragraphs 27 to 31.

V. Common factors in equitable geographic distribution in the United Nations common system[3]

46. The governing bodies of the various organizations of the United Nations common system have attempted to define those posts that should be subject to equitable geographical distribution. This has been a decisive factor in establishing the extent of influence of the principle of geographical distribution. All organizations have excluded the General Service category from application of the principle. With the exception of the World Health Organization, all organizations also disregard all posts financed by extrabudgetary resources. Secretariats with language-related posts (e.g., translators and interpreters) exclude them from geographical distribution, arguing that particular linguistic requirements make the principle of equitable geographical distribution hard to apply to this category of staff. No appointments for less than a year's duration, regardless of the nature of the post concerned, take geographical distribution into account. Thus, while the principle of equitable geographical distribution is universally accepted, it is generally applied to less than 20 per cent of occupied posts. No regionally based quota has been considered except at the Universal Postal Union. The factor of members' contributions to organizations' regular budgets has been accorded preference.

47. All organizations in the common system apply the three factors of membership, population and contribution to determine the midpoint to be assigned to each Member State. These factors are used in different combinations and to varying degrees. For example, the contribution factor varies from 30 per cent for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to 75 per cent for the World Intellectual Property Organization. Among the United Nations common system organizations, the weight of 5 per cent allotted at the United Nations for membership is the highest. Currently several organizations have not made specific allocations for this factor.

VI. Conclusion

48. The present report shows the impact on the system of geographical distribution if changes were to be made to the weights of existing factors (membership, population and contribution) to determine the desirable ranges of representation for Member States, as well as to the base figure. The various simulations using the variants described in the report show that changing the weights of the factors will result in important changes in the representation status of Member States. The same is true when the base figure is expanded to include staff currently not having geographic status. Expanding the base figure has financial implications, as it means granting international status, with its associated allowances and benefits, to a larger pool of staff. It is projected that the inclusion of staff in the General Service and related categories will cost the Organization approximately $55.5 million annually. In addition, enlarging the base figure to include extrabudgetary staff affects stability, which will consequently affect human resources planning.

49. The Secretary-General draws the General Assembly's attention to the potential advantages and drawbacks of each of the scenarios presented for its consideration.

50. **The Secretary-General recommends that the General Assembly take note of the present report.**

Notes

[1] See paragraph 18 of A/C.5/35/36, 27 October 1980.

[2] The unit cost for the General Service category is $4.6 million divided by 304 staff members, which amounts to $15,131. To obtain the total cost of the impact, this number is multiplied by the number of General Service and related staff whose duty station is not in their country of nationality, Secretariat-wide, 3,663. The total cost is $55.5 million. The total number of General Service staff is evenly divided between the regular budget and extrabudgetary resources.

[3] *Sources*: "Comparison of methods of calculating equitable geographical distribution within the United Nations common system", report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/51/705) "Review of organizations' practices in respect of geographical balance in staffing" (addendum), Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB/2004/HLCM/R.7/Add.1, 24 February 2004).